



Wisconsin Youth Tobacco Survey 2001 – Volume 1

**Tobacco Usage Prevalence, Selected Points of Interest and an
Introduction to the Thomas T. Melvin Youth Prevention and Education
Campaign**

Prepared by the

**Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Public Health
Department of Health and Family Services
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Purpose

The Wisconsin Youth Tobacco Survey (WYTS) is a comprehensive measure of youth tobacco use in Wisconsin. The WYTS tracks tobacco use, attitudes, and related behaviors among public school students in middle and high school (grades 6-12). The comprehensive data set produced by the survey, provides the ability to make valid statewide estimates of tobacco use among the Wisconsin public middle and high school student population. It is also the first statewide data collected on tobacco use among middle school youth.

In 2001, WYTS was only performed in middle schools (as high school students participated in another survey – Youth Risk Behavior Survey, results will be released through the Department of Public Instruction). High school students will be included again in the WYTS 2002 survey.

The reports based on this survey data are available on the Tobacco Control Program web site: <http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/health/TobaccoControl> or at the address listed at the end of the section. Following each section is a brief analysis of the importance of the findings covered in several tables.

Methods

The Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS), Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and school districts across Wisconsin cooperated in the survey administration. Surveys were administered during the months of March, April, and May 2001 in 82 randomly chosen schools through a contract with the Department of Preventive Medicine, University of Wisconsin, Madison. The WYTS questionnaire, first used in the 2000 school year, used expertise from the American Legacy Foundation, the Office of Smoking and Health at the CDC and national experts and was adapted for use in Wisconsin.

The 2001 YTS was funded through the Wisconsin Thomas T. Melvin Youth Tobacco Prevention and Education Program, Division of Public Health, DHFS.

Public schools containing the grades 6, 7, and 8 (for middle schools) were included in the potential survey sample. A random sample was chosen by standard scientific methods from all eligible schools.

All students in the selected classes were eligible to participate in the survey.

Thirty-nine of 49 randomly selected middle schools participated in the Wisconsin Youth Tobacco Survey. In the participating schools, 1591 of the 1775 sampled students (90%) completed usable questionnaires. This gave an overall response rate of 71% for all potentially eligible students in the original 49 eligible schools.

Disclaimer

This report is based only on data from the year 2000 and 2001. As such, it has potentially strong limitations in regards to tracking of trends in prevalence and perceptions by middle school grade children that may be of importance in understanding why some youth smoke in Wisconsin (and how best to devise strategies to prevent and reduce use).

Tobacco Usage Prevalence

Nevertheless, this report should help provide a baseline understanding of the influences toward smoking behavior and attitudes on smoking behavior in the middle school years. These data will also be used in conjunction with other local and national data that explore similar topics.

The Wisconsin Tobacco Control Program

The Wisconsin Tobacco Control Program, located within the DHFS (Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Public Health), is committed to reducing tobacco usage in Wisconsin. The Program, in collaboration with Wisconsin local health departments and other community organizations active in tobacco control, works towards the following goals:

- ❖ **Eliminate Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke**
- ❖ **Reduce Smoking Initiation among Youth**
- ❖ **Promote Quitting among Adults and Young People**
- ❖ **Identify and Eliminate Health Disparities Among Population Groups**

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This information will also be found on the Tobacco Control Program web site at:

<http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/health/TobaccoControl>

Acknowledgements

Many dedicated persons contributed to the 2001 WYTS survey and analysis. We especially wish to thank all the participating students, teachers and principals.

Major Findings

Prevalence

- ❖ Among all questions in this report, there were no increases in tobacco usage between the years 2000 and 2001.
- ❖ From 2000 to 2001, overall current-smoking rates dropped from 12% to 9% among Wisconsin middle school students – this was a drop of 25%.
- ❖ From 2000 to 2001 there was a large drop in current smoking rates among Wisconsin 7th grade (13% to 9%) and 8th grade (20% to 12%) middle school students respectively.
- ❖ Eighth grade middle schools had a drop of 8%, which exceeded the national drop of 3% from 2000 to 2001. Also, in 2000 Wisconsin 8th graders had a rate of smoking that exceeded the national average by 5%. In 2001, Wisconsin 8th graders now have current smoking rates equal to the national average.¹
- ❖ From 2000 to 2001 the percentage of Wisconsin middle school students who had “ever” used a cigarette dropped from 39% to 33%.
- ❖ Total usage of any current tobacco product dropped from 16% to 13% from 2000 to 2001 among Wisconsin middle school students.
- ❖ Between 2000 and 2001 Wisconsin total current usage of both cigars and smokeless tobacco dropped by 2 percentage points (6% to 4%) among middle school students. This represents one third of the total usage of cigars/cigarillos and one half of the total usage of smokeless tobacco products.

Belief that Smoking Makes One Look “Cool or Fit in”

- ❖ Only 10% of Wisconsin middle school students thought smoking makes one “look cool or fit in”. This was a drop of 2% from the previous year. While this was a small drop in terms of percentage points - it was a drop of one sixth of the total percentage from the year 2000.

Desire to Quit

- ❖ The percentage of Wisconsin middle school student smokers who wanted to quit smoking rose 13% in 2001 to 68%. This increase was attributable mainly to an increase in the desire to quit smoking among the female students of 19%. This is noteworthy, as female students have had larger increases in smoking rates than male students in Wisconsin and nationally over the last decade.

¹ National Data from the Monitoring the Future Study, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan under a contract from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Questions, Definitions, and Results

1. Current Cigarette Smoking

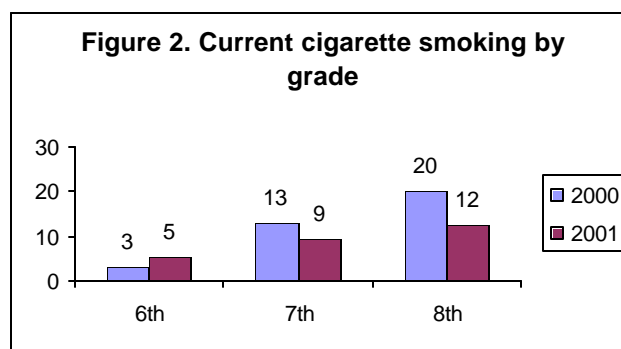
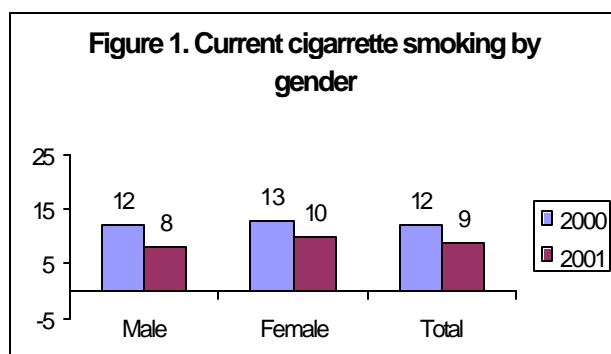
Middle school students were asked the following questions:

❖ “During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?”

The response options were (a) 0 days (b) 1 to 2 days’ (c) 3 to 5 days’ (d) 6 to 9 days’ (e) 10 to 19 days’ (f) 20 to 29 days’ (g) All 30 days.

Current cigarette smoking was defined as smoking at least one day out of the previous 30 days.

Frequent cigarette smoking was defined as smoking on 20 or more days of the previous 30 days.



- From 2000 to 2001, overall current-smoking rates dropped from 12% to 9%.
- Females in both years had slightly higher smoking rates than did males.
- From 2000 to 2001 there was a large drop in current smoking rates among students in 7th grade (13% to 9%) and 8th grade (20% to 12%) respectively.
- In 2000 and 2001 the percent of frequent smokers was stable at 4% (not graphed)

2. “Ever” Cigarette Smoking

Middle school students were asked:

- ❖ “Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?”
The response options were (a) Yes (b) No.

Ever cigarette smoking was defined as responding ‘Yes.’

Figure 3. "Ever" cigarette smoking by gender

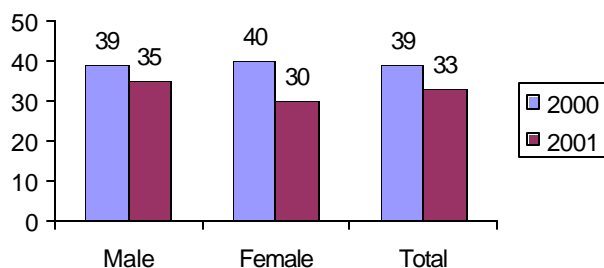
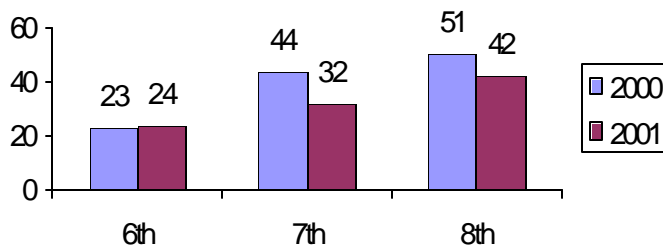


Figure 4. "Ever" cigarette smoking by grade



- From 2000 to 2001 the percentage of middle school students that had “ever” used a cigarette dropped from 39% to 33%.
- The largest drop was among the 8th grade middle school students from 51% to 42%.
- This decrease was present in both genders, but was greater among female (10%) than among male (4%). middle school students.

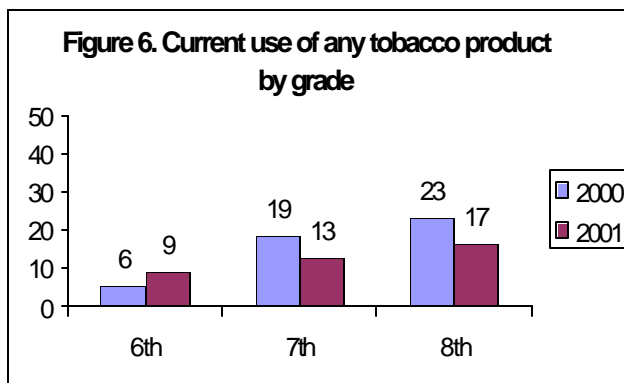
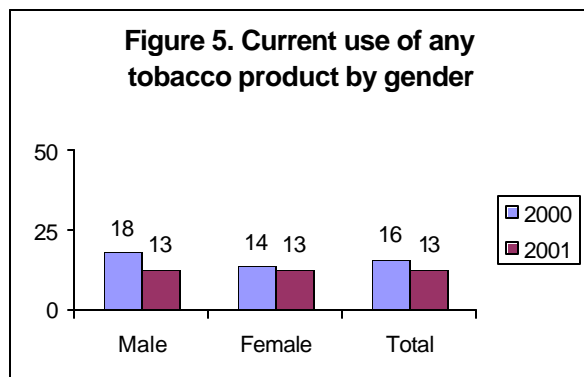
3. Current Use of Any Tobacco Product by Gender and Grade

Middle school students were asked:

- ❖ “During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?”
- ❖ “During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigars, cigarillos (miniature cigars) or little cigars?”
- ❖ “During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke bidis (cigarette like product containing tobacco)?”
- ❖ “During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke tobacco in a pipe?”
- ❖ “During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip?”

The response options were (a) 0 days (b) 1 to 2 days (c) 3 to 5 days (d) 6 to 9 days (e) 10 to 19 days (f) 20 to 29 days (g) All 30 days.

Current tobacco use was defined as a respondent that said he or she used any of five product classes (1) cigarettes; 2) cigars or cigarillos; 3) “bidis”; 4) pipes; and 5) chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip) on at least one day out of the previous 30 days.



- Total usage of any current tobacco product dropped from 16% to 13% from 2000 to 2001 among middle school students.
- In 2001, 13% of male and female middle school students used any tobacco product during the last month.
- In 2000, there was a difference in the current use of any tobacco product by 17% from the 6th to the 8th grade, this difference dropped to 8% between the same grades in 2001.

4. “Ever” and Current Use of Different Tobacco Products

Middle students were asked:

- ❖ “Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?”
- ❖ “Have you ever tried smoking cigars, cigarillos or little cigars, even one or two puffs?”
- ❖ “Have you ever used chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip, such as Redman, Levi Garrett, Beechnut, Skoal, Skoal Bandits, or Copenhagen?”

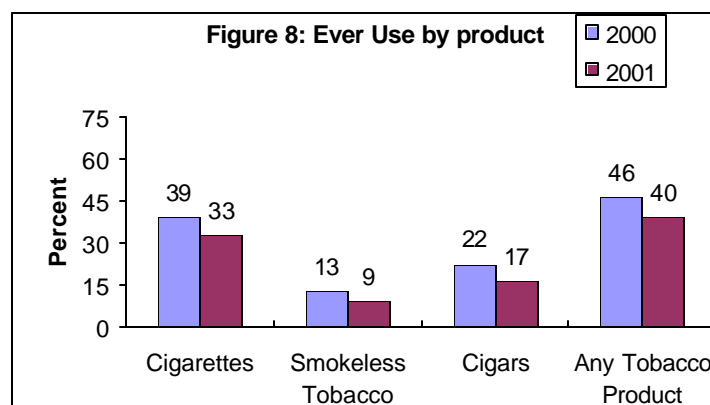
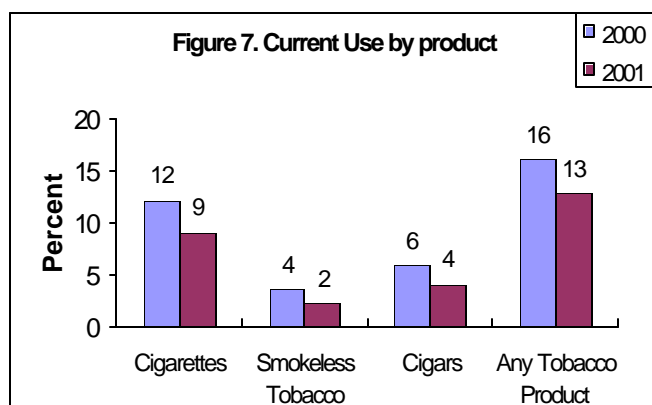
The response options were (a) Yes (b) No.

- ❖ “Have you ever tried smoking any of the following:”

The response options were (a) bidis (b) kreteks (sort of a combination of a cigar and a cigarette, sometimes fragmented) (c) I have tried both bidis and kreteks (d) I have never smoked bidis or kreteks.

Ever tobacco use was defined as responding yes to any of the first three questions, or a, b, or c to the question on bidis and kreteks. Each respondent was only counted once no matter how many different products he or she might have ever used.²

Current use was defined as on the previous page.



- There was a decrease in the initiation and current usage of all tobacco products from 2000 to 2001. The largest decrease (in terms of a drop in the percent usage) occurred in the “ever” usage of cigarettes, from 39% to 33% among middle school students.
- Ever usage of smokeless tobacco dropped almost one third from 13% to 9% between 2000 and 2001 among middle school students.

² The tobacco products combined to define **current tobacco use** (cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, little cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, pipe, and/or bidis) vary slightly from the tobacco products combined to define **ever tobacco use** (cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, little cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, bidis, and/or kreteks). Kreteks were not included in current tobacco use and pipe smoking was not included in characterizing ever tobacco use.

5. Current Cigar/Cigarillo Use

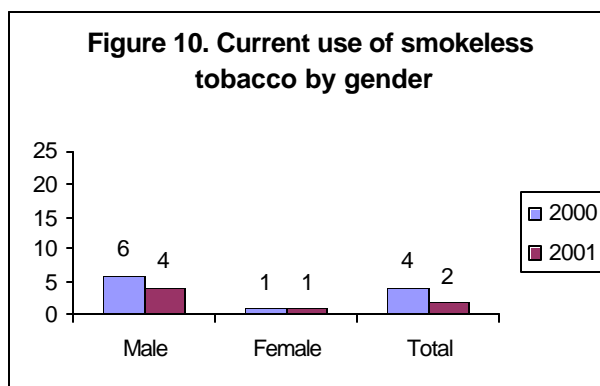
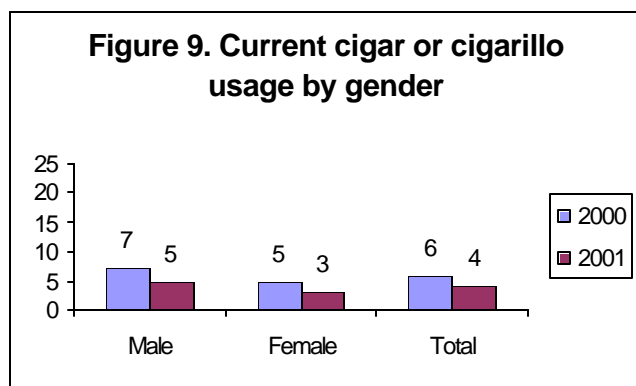
Middle school students were asked the following two questions:

- ❖ “During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars?”
The response options were (a) 0 days (b) 1 to 2 days (c) 3 to 5 days (d) 6 to 9 days (e) 10 to 19 days (f) 20 to 29 days (g) All 30 days.

Current cigar, cigarillo, or little cigar smoking was defined as smoking at least one day out of the previous 30 days.

- ❖ “During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip?”
The response options were (a) 0 days (b) 1 to 2 days (c) 3 to 5 days (d) 6 to 9 days (e) 10 to 19 days (f) 20 to 29 days (g) All 30 days.

Current smokeless tobacco use was defined as using chewing tobacco, snuff or dip at least one day out of the previous 30 days.



- Usage of either smokeless tobacco products or cigars/cigarillos is low (less than or equal to 5% in both males and females) among middle school students.
- Between 2000 and 2001 current usage of both cigars and smokeless tobacco dropped by 2% in middle school students. Although, this may seem like at first like a small percentage, it was one third of the usage of cigars/cigarillos and one half of the total usage of smokeless tobacco products.
- Male usage remains higher than female usage for both cigar/cigarillos and smokeless tobacco among middle school students.

Section Discussion

Approximately 80% of adult smokers started smoking before the age of 18. Every day, nearly 3,000 young people under the age of 18 become regular smokers. More than 5 million children living today will die prematurely because of a decision they will make as adolescents, the decision to smoke cigarettes.³

Each day more than 6,000 young Americans try their first cigarette. Also, if present trends continue, 5 million young people currently alive today will die of tobacco related causes. Moreover, the decision to use tobacco is nearly always made in the teen years, when young people greatly underestimate the true health risks and addictive nature of smoking.⁴

In Wisconsin there is evidence from comparing 2000 and 2001 YTS data in a series of questions - that Wisconsin's middle school students are demonstrating potentially significant early trends in dramatically lower usage of various tobacco products.

Of particular interest, is that current use of cigarette smoking in all Wisconsin middle school students fell from 12% to 9%. (Figure 1) Moreover, as shown in Figure 2, current cigarette smoking among Wisconsin's 8th grade middle students fell from 20% to 12%. This 12% is equal to the national average for this grade. This is in sharp contrast to 2000, when Wisconsin's 8th graders had a current smoking rate of 20% compared to a national average of 15% for this grade.⁵

Figures 3 and 4 also reveal that a growing percentage of our middle school students are not beginning to smoke in the first place. There was an overall drop in "ever" smoking from 39% to 33% (Figure 3) and a similar 9% drop in 8th graders from 51% to 42%. (Figure 4) between 2000 and 2001. This also appears to be an important trend. In 1994, Dr. Jocelyn Elder's, U.S. Surgeon General stressed that preventing children from smoking in the first place would be a critical component of any successful fight to prevent youth and eventual adult smoking.⁶ The largest one-year drop (from 40% to 30%) in the "ever" use of cigarettes occurred in females. This may suggest another notable trend - as females have had consistently larger national increases in teenage smoking in the last decade than males.⁷

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Center for Chronic Disease, Tobacco Control Program Web site, <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/issue.htm>, 1/03/02.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Chronic Disease Notes and Reports, Vol. 14., No. 3, Fall 2001.

⁵ Monitoring the Future Study – Press Release and Executive Summary, Cigarette smoking among American teens declines sharply in 2001, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 12/31 and web cite: <http://monitoringthefuture.org/>.

⁶ Preventing Tobacco Use among Young People, A Report of the Surgeon General – 1994, U.S. DHHS.

⁷ Data from Monitoring the Future Study, Cigarette smoking among American teens declines sharply in 2001, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 12/31 and web cite: <http://monitoringthefuture.org/>.

Tobacco Usage Prevalence

The current and “ever” use of a variety of various tobacco products has also decreased in the last year. In fact, as Figures 5 and 6 demonstrate, all measured tobacco products (cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, cigars/cigarillos and the use of any tobacco product) had substantial decreases in 2001.⁸ This seems to demonstrate that there has not been a switch from cigarettes to other types of tobacco products in the middle school age group. It also suggests that all tobacco products are potentially becoming socially less acceptable.

Is there an explanation for such an apparent success story during the past two years among all types of tobacco products by Wisconsin’s middle school populations? During the last several decades, experts have suggested that public health educational interventions could reduce teenage smoking.⁹ One frequently cited source in this regard, was the 1994 Surgeon General’s Report on Youth Smoking. This Report suggested that 20-40% of youth smoking could be prevented or postponed through effective educational campaigns. Several pertinent points from this document are:

1. School-based smoking-prevention programs that identify social influences to smoke and teach skills to resist those influences have demonstrated consistent and significant reductions in adolescent smoking prevalence. Programs to prevent smokeless tobacco use that are based on the same model have also demonstrated modest reductions in the initiation of smokeless tobacco use.
2. The effectiveness of school-based smoking-prevention programs appears to be enhanced and sustained by comprehensive school health education and by community wide programs that involve parents, mass media, community organizations, or other elements of an adolescent's social environment.⁵

Although definitive cause and effect cannot yet be established, an innovative State of Wisconsin Program to combat youth tobacco appears to be playing a significant role in the 2000-2001 decreases in middle school youth tobacco use prevalence. This Program follows closely the model type of program recommended in the Surgeon General’s Report and is called the Thomas T. Melvin Tobacco Prevention and Education Program.

Introduction to the Thomas T. Melvin Tobacco Prevention and Education Program

The Thomas T. Melvin Youth Tobacco Prevention and Education Program is administrated by Wisconsin Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Family Services in the Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Under (ss 255.10) the program supports five coordinated efforts: 1) community initiatives; 2) a multi-media education campaign; 3) expanded tobacco education curricula; 4) research; and 5) program evaluation and surveillance.

Currently, the media campaign is primarily centered in the following areas: La Crosse, Eau Claire, Beloit, Janesville, Madison, Fond de Lac and Wausau, and Milwaukee and surrounding districts. However, in conjunction with increased funding for the program through the Wisconsin Tobacco Control Board, youth tobacco media prevention is becoming a statewide reality. This media and other efforts have been especially targeted at reducing female youth smoking - previously the fastest growing group of young smokers.

⁸ Based on a percentage of the 2000 Survey total as demonstrated in the applicable figures.

⁹ Centers for Disease Control Office on Smoking and Health, personal communication with Dr. Peter Rumm, Chief Medical Officer, WI DPH/DHFS, 12/01.

⁵ Preventing Tobacco Use among Young People, A Report of the Surgeon General – 1994, U.S. DHHS.

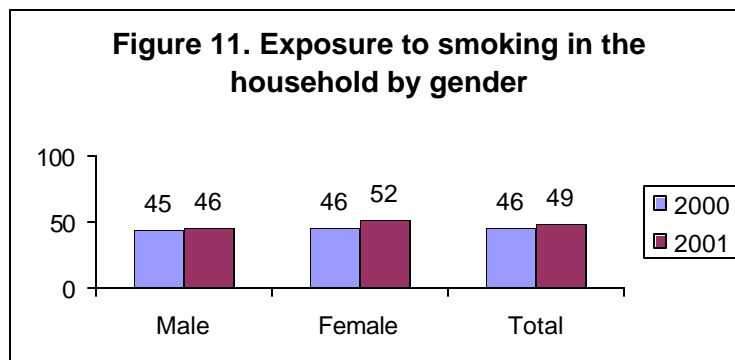
Questions Definitions and Results

6. Household Exposure

Middle school students were asked:

❖ *Does anyone with you now smoke cigarettes?*

The response options were (1) yes (b) no.



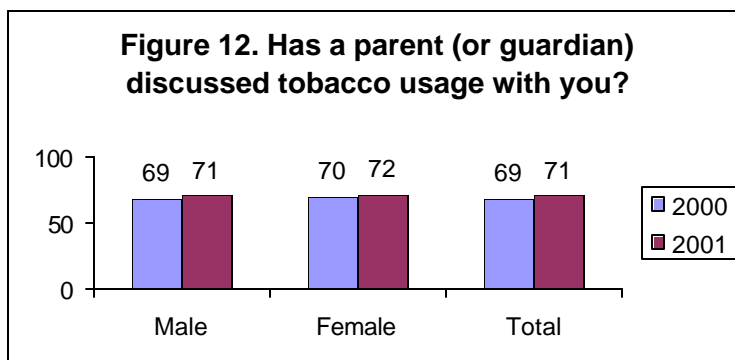
- From 2000 to 2001, living with a smoker in the household increased from 46% to 49% among all middle school students.
- Female middle school students in 2001 (with a percentage rate of 52%) had a six percentage point greater risk of living with a household member whom smoked than did male students (who had a rate of 46%).

Selected Points of Interest

7. Recall of a History of a Parental or Guardian Discussion about the Use of Tobacco

Middle school students were asked:

- ❖ Has either of your parents (or guardians) discussed tobacco usage with you?
The response options were (1) yes (b) no.



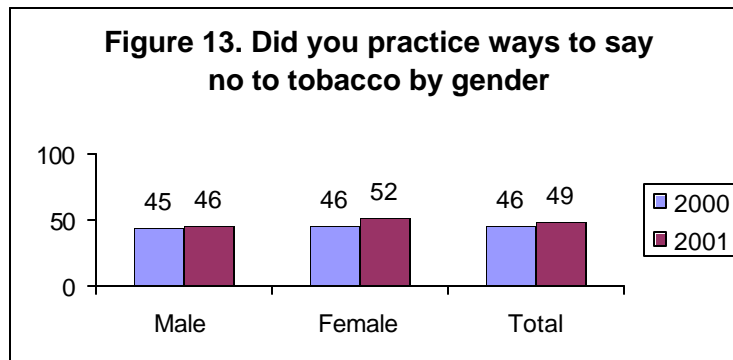
- Over a two-year period (2000-2001), about 70% of middle school children recalled a past history of a parent or guardian discussing tobacco use with them.
- Both male and female middle school students had a small (2%) increase from 2000 to 2001 in the recall of a parent or guardian discussing tobacco use with them.

8. Role Playing to Say No to Tobacco

Middle school students were asked:

- ❖ During this past school year, did you practice ways to saying NO to tobacco in any of your classes (for example, by role-playing)?

The response options were (1) yes (b) no.

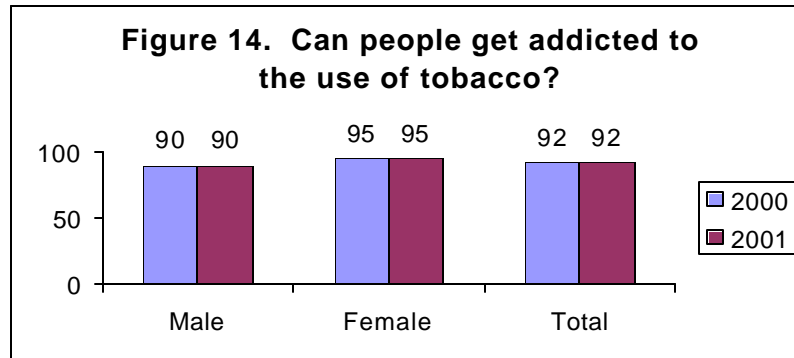


- Three percent more middle school students practiced ways to say NO to tobacco in 2001 (49%) than in the year 2000 (46%).
- Female middle school students reported a six-percentage point increase in 2001 to 52% - while males had a slight 1% increase to 46%.

9. Knowledge of the Addiction Capability of Tobacco Products

Middle school students were asked:

- ❖ *Can people get addicted to using tobacco just as they can get addicted to using cocaine or heroine?*
The response options were (1) yes (b) no.

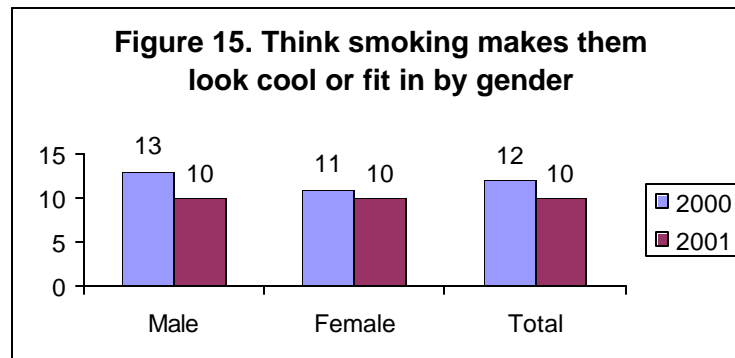


- There was no change in the percentage rate of students that answered correctly (yes) by either gender or by all middle school students between 2000 and 2001.
- At least 90% of both male and female middle school students were aware of the danger of addiction.
- In both 2000 and 2001, female middle school students (95%) were more likely to be aware of the addiction potential of tobacco than were the male students (90%).

10. A Social Perception on Smoking

Middle School Students were asked:

❖ *Does you think that smoking makes young people look cool or fit in?:*
The response options were (1) yes (b) no.



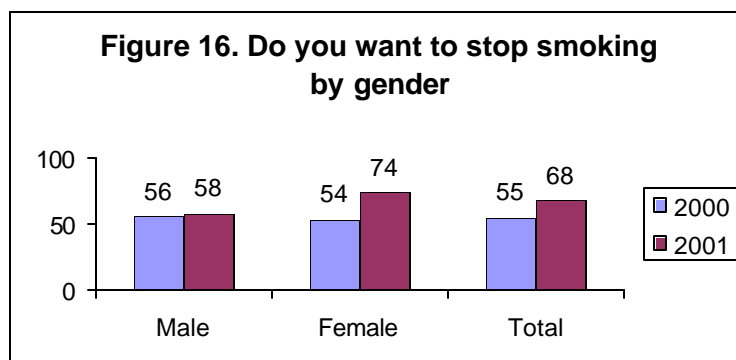
- Only 10% of middle school students in 2001 thought smoking make one “look cool or fit in”.
- This was a drop of two percentage points from the previous year. While this was a small drop in terms of percentage points, it was a drop of one sixth of the total percentage from the year 2000.
- Male middle school students had a 3 three percentage point drop versus a one percentage point drop for female students.

11. Desire to Stop Smoking among Current Smokers

Middle School Students were asked:

❖ Do you want to stop smoking cigarettes? (Among those that were a current smoker)

The response options were (1) yes (b) no.



- The percentage of middle school student smokers who wanted to quit smoking rose thirteen percentage points in 2001 to 68%.
- This increase was attributable mainly to an increase in the desire to quit smoking among the female students of nineteen percentage points, versus a much smaller, three percentage point increase by male students.

Section Discussion

This section encompasses several potentially interesting questions from the survey that have some relationship to Wisconsin's middle school youth's usage of tobacco products. They are drawn from the questions not covered in the 2001 YTS Survey under the previous section on usage prevalence.

The first of this report's additional questions relates to the exposure of Wisconsin's middle school children to environmental smoke in the home. Several years of national smoking data suggest that exposure to parental or other adult smokers in the home increase the likelihood of youth smoking.¹⁰ Moreover, environmental smoke is a health hazard for youth, with a link to many respiratory conditions including asthma.¹¹ As demonstrated in Figure 11 there has been a three-percentage point increase in 2001. During this year, about one half (49%) of students reported that they are exposed to a smoker in the home.

During the past two years an average of 70% of the students have had a parent or guardian discuss the dangers of smoking with them (Figure 12). This high percentage rate seems to suggest that even in households where there is an exposure to adult smoking, the adults are making an effort to dissuade their children from smoking.

About one half of students (49%) in 2001 have practiced saying no to tobacco in their classrooms. This percentage was up by three percentage points from the previous year. (Figure 13) Evidence is accumulating that actual practice in classroom or other situations may play a role in some students not beginning to smoke. There is some evidence that these may be some of the same children who may be at greater risk from other correlated at risk behaviors, which include sexual transmitted disease, violence, low self esteem and school failure.¹²

Tobacco is a very addictive substance in all forms. Ninety-two percent of all middle school students recognize the addictive capability of this drug as demonstrated by Figure 14, a figure that has remained consistent over the last two years.

Perhaps, a key indication that there seems to be strong potential for preventing youth tobacco initiation is the fact that the great majority of middle school students do not believe that "smoking makes them look cool or fit in". In 2001, only one Wisconsin middle school student in ten thought that smoking made someone cool or helped them fit in as demonstrated in Figure 15.

Finally, there was also a positive trend in the percent of current smokers who desire to quite. As demonstrated in Figure 16, more than two thirds of the sampled middle school students in 2001 want to quit smoking. Moreover, this desire was highest in female smokers, increasing 20% to 74%. This is an encouraging positive trend, as females have been the most at risk group to start smoking in the last decade.¹³

¹⁰ Monitoring the Future Study – Press Release and Executive Summary, Cigarette smoking among American teens declines sharply in 2001, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 12/31 and web cite: <http://monitoringthefuture.org/>.

¹¹ Centers for Disease Control, Office of Smoking and Health and their web cite: http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/research_data/environmental/factsheet_ets.htm

¹² Centers for Disease Control, Office on Smoking and Health, Personal communication with Dr. Peter Rumm, Chief Medical Officer, DPH/DHFS. Information on the relationship between at risk behaviors is also found in the Monitoring the Future Study and the 1994 Surgeon General Reports which have been cited previously.

¹³ Monitoring the Future Study – Press Release and Executive Summary, Cigarette smoking among American teens declines sharply in 2001, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 12/31 and Wisconsin 2000 and 2001 YTS Reports.
